



Town of Rowe  
**Board of Selectmen** Minutes  
Monday, November 23, 2020 –5:00 p.m.  
VIA TELECONFERENCE

Meetings normally held at the Municipal Offices are being held remotely, with adequate, alternative means of public access and, where required, public participation provided, in accordance with the Governor's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c.30A § 20.

**Board of Selectmen:** Chair Charles Sokol, Selectman Ed Silva, Vice-Chair Joanne Semanie  
**Staff:** Janice Boudreau, Executive Secretary, Paul McLatchy III, Administrative Assistant to the Boards, Police Chief Julie Shippee, Police Officer C. Selmi Hyttinen

**Call to Order:** Chair Sokol called the meeting to order at 5:02 P.M.

**Roll Call Vote: Chair Sokol- yes Ed Silva- yes Vice-Chair Semanie- yes (Vote: 3-0-0)**

Announcement of recording devices: one  
Noteworthy Announcements (as needed): None

**Minutes:**

1. Minutes of November 10, 2020- Covid Group:
2. Minutes of November 17, 2020- Covid Group:

**MOTION TO APPROVE: Chair Sokol made a motion to approve the Minutes of Covid-19 Group meetings of November 10, 2020 and November 17, 2020 as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie.**

**Roll Call Vote: Chair Sokol- yes Vice-Chair Semanie- yes (Vote: 2-0-1)**  
**Ed Silva- abstained from the vote.**

3. Minutes of November 12, 2020:

**MOTION TO APPROVE: Chair Sokol made a motion to approve the Minutes of November 17, as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chair Selectman Silva.**

**Roll Call Vote: Chair Sokol- yes Ed Silva- yes Vice-Chair Semanie- yes**  
**(Vote: 3-0-0)**

**Selectboard Business:**

**New Business:**

1. Semanie Request for Compensation: Joanne Semanie recused herself from the discussion.

The Board of Selectmen reviewed a letter requesting \$1500.00 for financial work done for the town in the absence of a Treasurer from July 23, 2020 to November 10, 2020 and the 'Disclosure by Municipal Employee of Financial Interest in a Municipal Contract as Required by MGL C. 268A §20(b)'.

**MOTION TO APPROVE: Following review, Chair Sokol made a motion to approve \$1500.00 be paid to Joanne Semanie for work performed during the absence of the Treasurer from July 23, 2020 to November 10, 2020. The motion was seconded by Selectman Silva.**

**Roll Call Vote: Chair Sokol- yes Ed Silva - yes (Vote: 2-0-1)**  
**Vice-Chair Semanie - abstained from the vote.**

Vice-Chair Semanie returned to the meeting at 5:18 p.m.

2. **Observations & Recommendations for Road Safety- Transportation Planning Engineer:**  
The Board of Selectmen reviewed the report from Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) Transportation Planning Engineer Laurie Scarbrough. She presented a report, 'Observations and Recommendations for Curve Safety' along with traffic counts for a several days for Zoar Road, speed records and the type of traffic. There was discussion about the speed signs in town and whether they were needed. Police Chief Julie Shippee expressed her concerns over the cost involved in signage and enforcement. Chair Sokol asked for clarification whether some signage is acceptable, the process for changing signs and wants clarification in writing. Officer Hyytinen said there was a citizen request for a 'Children at Play' sign on Hazelton Road. It was decided to ask Laurie Scarbrough to attend a meeting and Highway Superintendent to discuss signs further and have questions clarified. Executive Secretary said that a program to replace signs as needed could be put into place as well as joining a collective sign purchase with other towns to reduce cost and set up a maintenance plan each year to upgrade and/or replace signs. Ms. Boudreau also expressed concern about proper signage at the school and at the "Joe King Hill" area and that there are safety concerns that could be addressed in that area as suggested by the Transportation Planning Engineer.

#### **Old Business:**

1. **Town Operations and Covid Safety Measures:** It was noted that DPW, Administrative Offices, Custodian and Police Dept. submitted draft plans for the 'Continuity of Operations Plan' and that there needs to be ongoing discussion about the plans.
2. **Retirees Insurance Sign on Policies:** Administrative Staff presented Selectmen with draft additions to be added to the Personnel Policy Manual concerning insurance benefits to retirees to Personnel Policy Manual for clarification.

**MOTION TO ADD TO PERSONNEL POLICY MANUAL: Chair Sokol made a motion to add to Section 34 under the section Insurance the following as amended:**

#### **"Retiree Health Insurance Enrollment"**

At the time of retirement, a retiree may remain in any existing insurance plan he or she is enrolled in at the time of retirement and eligible for as a retiree. This policy applies to all types of insurance and benefits available to retirees.

Any employee not on a certain insurance plan at the time of retirement has until the end of the next open enrollment period to sign up for said insurance for themselves and/or their spouse. Should a Retiree and/or their spouse wish to enroll in a particular insurance after this point they will not be able to do so, including as a result of the loss of benefits through another provider (i.e. if a spouse carried insurance).

Retirees who marry/remarry after retirement may add their new spouse to insurance(s), but must do so by the end of the next open enrollment period. Spouses of deceased retirees will be able to continue their coverage, but no new coverages may be added, nor may any additional persons be covered.

Retirees may alternate between existing levels of coverage during open enrollment (i.e. different dental plans), but may not add new plans that they are not already enrolled in."

**The motion was seconded by Selectman Silva.**

**Roll Call Vote: Chair Sokol- yes Ed Silva- yes Vice-Chair Semanie- yes**  
**(Vote: 3-0-0)**

3. **Comp Time Follow Up Discussion:** Selectmen discussed concerns with adding a Cost of Living Increase or COLA each year without consideration of each specific position causing a position to potentially be overcompensated. Chair Sokol said that there needs to be consideration given to each position and that the compensation for a given position should possibly be capped. Also, how to pay a person when starting with a new employee and whether there should be a method for calculating pay starting rate and when new duties are added to a position. Chair Sokol said it would be good to get more depts. involved and that he would craft a letter to invite depts. to discuss further. The wage study should bring parity with other comparable towns and possibly cap salaries that are too high.

#### **Contracts/Warrants:**

1. **Warrant Review: Review Warrants FY21 W011 and FY21 PW11:** Vice-Chair Semanie reported that the last Warrant FY21 W10 & FY21 PW10 were fine and that the new Warrant was not in yet.
2. **Professional Services Agreement by and Between FRCOG and Town of Rowe:** Selectmen reviewed an agreement for procurement services by Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) for educational kiosks and mapping related to a Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership FY 21 grant received by the Park from the MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs.

**MOTION TO APPROVE AGREEMENT: Chair Sokol made a motion to approve the 'Professional Services Agreement by and Between the Franklin Regional Council of Government and the Town of Rowe for Procurement and Grant Administration Services for Rowe's Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership FY 21 Grant. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chair Semanie.**

**Roll Call Vote: Chair Sokol- yes Ed Silva- yes Vice-Chair Semanie- yes**  
**(Vote: 3-0-0)**

### **Administrative Office Updates:**

- Selectmen reviewed the Executive Secretary Updates and Administrative Assistant updates that were presented.
- Administrative Assistant Paul McLatchy III:
  - Ethics Disclosure: Enclosing Ethics Disclosure for Selectmen review
  - Small Bridge Grant: Submissions made and awaiting the contract relating to work on Ford Hill Road
  - COOP: Presented a draft Continuity of Operations Plan and will require additional work.
  - King's Highway Bridge: The project nearly completed for the King's Highway Bridge rebuild and may need a bit more work in the spring.
  - Policies: Working on drafting policies and will submit soon
  - Payroll: Working with Treasurer to teach her payroll and doing cross-training in several areas.
- Executive Secretary reported the following:
  - Audit: Waiting for the Agreement from Scanlon & Associates for the Cash Audit for FY20.
  - EMD: Sent Greg Poehlin's follow up information for Fire Chief to follow up on
  - Fire Dept. new position: advertised for the new position and gave resumes received to Fire Chief for follow up.
  - Gracy House: White Heating needs to reschedule winterization at Gracy House
  - Phones: working on details related to the new phone system and installation
  - Regional Meeting: Ms. Boudreau attended a regional meeting related to towns along the Deerfield River and discussed issues related to the impact of outdoor recreation and impact for area towns. Another meeting will occur in January.
  - Wage Survey: will be receiving a proposal for a wage/stipend/salary survey and rating system and would continue to research options.
  - Front Door: Working with a Locksmith to repair front Town Hall door.
  - Broadband Hut: Cosmetic work on the Broadband hut should be completed by next week. Selectman Silva asked that we make certain to obtain insurance certificates from our vendors as part of our bidding process.

**Unforeseen Business** (within preceding 48 hours): None

### **Future Meeting(s):**

Chair Sokol said the next meeting would be on Monday, November 23, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. Discussion to include: 'Town Procedures Responding to Covid-19', road signs report, and wage and salary follow-up. Selectman Silva said he would like to discuss the Rowe Camp and Conference Center tax exempt status for their rental properties.

### **Adjournment:**

**MOTION TO ADJOURN: Chair Sokol made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:17 p.m. The motion was seconded by Selectman Silva.**

**Roll Call Vote: Chair Sokol- yes Ed Silva- yes Vice-Chair Semanie- yes**

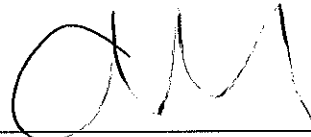
**(Vote: 3-0-0)**


Respectfully Submitted,

Janice Boudreau, Executive Secretary

Approval Date: DECEMBER 10, 2020

Approved:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Chuck Sokol, Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ed Silva, Selectman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Joanne Semanie, Vice-Chair

**Documents:**

1. Agenda November 23, 2020
2. Minutes of November 10, 2020 - Covid Group
3. Minutes of November 12, 2020
4. Minutes of November 17, 2020 – Covid Group
5. Observations & Recommendations for Road Safety- Transportation Planning Engineer
6. Speed/Class/Count Traffic Data Zoar Road - 2020
7. Police Dept. – Covid19 Plan
8. Custodian- Covid19 Plan
9. DPW Coop Plan
10. Admin COOP Bullet Points
11. Administrative – Covid19 Plan
12. Draft Personnel Policy Manual Policies re: Insurance
13. Wage Schedule Draft
14. Professional Services Agreement by and Between FRCOG and Town of Rowe
15. Administrative Assistant Updates
16. Executive Secretary Updates

**Mail:**

1. Resignation Letter Quist from the MTWP
2. Copy: Disclosure by Special Municipal Employee Filing – McLatchy III
3. EOHED – Letter re: MassWorks
4. Semanie Request for Compensation